

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

277

man of the world could be unaware that he was damaging his own reputation far more than the objects of his attacks is a mystery. The *mot* is attributed to v7iiliam n that Billow is the only known example of a man committing suicide after his death. *

Next in importance among German leaders is the testimony of Tirpitz, who told his story twice over. His Memoirs, published shortly after the war, were widely read, and a cheap abridgement enjoyed an enormous sale. Several years later he returned to the charge in two massive volumes entitled *Political Documents*, stuffed with valuable material. The Admiral was a big man, w^Tho knew what he wanted and strove with iron will to reach his goal. A great people, he declares, can only be made and kept safe by power, since Might has always gone before Right. The object of his battleships was not to make war but to win an independent position. The downfall of Germany was due to bad statesmanship. Mainly owing to the Kaiser's support a formidable navy was fashioned, but the army lagged behind. With a stronger army and a wiser attitude towards Russia, the position would have been unassailable. Simultaneously to antagonize England and Russia was a mistake. The gravedigger of Germany was Bethmann, who sacrificed the interests of national defence to the *beaux yeux* of perfidious Albion, and who tried to conduct war on the principle of limited liability. Tirpitz, like Billow, argues that his work was good, and that it was ruined by an incompetent Chancellor. " England's love of peace and consideration of our interests grew *pan passu* with our fleet." Metternich, • the unceasing advocate of naval limitation, receives almost as many lashes as Bethmann himself. The real

enemy before and during the war was England,
 not Russia.
 The fleet should have played for high stakes at
 the outset,
 and the submarine weapon should have been
 ruthlessly
 applied. In these strong and bitter books, which
 paint a
 devastating picture of disunion in high places,
 Tirpitz dismisses
 the civilians as contemptuously as Sir William
 Robertson in his
Soldiers and Statesmen. It is an old quarrel
 Ludendorff has
 written a book entitled *Politik und Kriegführung*
 to prove that
 the best chance of winning a war is
 when "political and military
 power are combined in a single hand, as in the
 case of Napoleon
 and Frederick the Great.

Very different in tone is Bethmann's *Reflections
 on the World
 War*. The unsullied character and devotion to
 peace of the